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ABSTRACT

A study explored how Retrospective Miscue Analysis (RMA) is successful, using discourse analysis of the questions and discussion strategies used during RMA. Seven readers with successful RMA sessions who represented several age/grade groups, ethnic groups, and linguistic backgrounds were chosen, and their discourse was analyzed over a period of 8 months. Examining what aspects of the RMA session support the readers' development of a positive view of himself or herself as a reader, over time, 4 subcategories emerged: procedural, language used, interactional, and ownership/control. Examining also what language the reader uses to talk about his or her reading process and strategies, over time, the study found 2 subcategories: reading process and metacognition. Findings show that a common thread through all of the readers' RMA sessions is their movement toward central roles in the dialogs, toward equanimity and parity with the teacher/researcher's contributions. This increase in discussant role goes hand-in-hand with an increase in the ability to talk about reading. As readers become more fluent in the language of reading, their confidence in their ability to learn about the reading process grows, and they become more in control of the RMA sessions. It is precisely this control over the reading process which influences reading proficiency. Teacher/researchers also learn how to discuss the reading process with each individual reader. RMA sessions tend to progress from a primarily teacher/researcher-driven dialog in the beginning sessions to a conversation between equals in the middle and latter sessions, during which it is frequently the reader who drives the session. (Contains 14 references, and 2 tables, and 13 figures of data.) (SR)

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by Yetta M. Goodman and Eric J. Paulson

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Teachers and Students Developing Language about Reading Through Retrospective Miscue Analysis

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I. Background and Proposed Research

Retrospective Miscue Analysis (RMA) is a collaborative exploration of a reader's reading process by both the reader and the teacher/researcher(s). It is an instructional activity or strategy lesson which opens up to the reader and to the teacher/researcher language about reading and the reading process, thereby 'revaluing' the reader and the reading process itself. Over a period of 20 years, research utilizing RMA methodology has been used to understand what occurs during the reading process as reported by readers involved in conversations and reflections about their reading. Three major conclusions have emerged from that research:

1. Readers revalue themselves as readers: they develop greater confidence as readers and define themselves as better readers.
2. Readers become conversant about the reading process and are able to articulate the ways in which they construct meaning as they read.
3. The reader's reading improves according to miscue analysis.

Research with retrospective miscue analysis that supports the above conclusions has been conducted on a range of students and adults (Marck, 1996). Good and poor readers in seventh grade have been studied (Goodman, Marck, Costello, Flurkey, Wizinowich & Brown, 1989), and

additional studies have been done in classrooms and with individual students of elementary school age (Brown, 1996; Costello, 1992; Flurkey, 1995; Germain, 1998; Martens, 1998), and adults (Marek, 1987). For additional studies see *Retrospective Miscue Analysis* (Goodman & Marek, 1996).

The purpose of this present study, funded by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Research Foundation, is not to explore *whether* RMA is a successful instructional strategy, but, through discourse analysis of the questions and discussion strategies used during RMA, to explore *how* RMA is successful.

II. Procedure

From a database of completed RMA studies, we chose seven readers with successful RMA sessions that represented several age/grade groups, ethnic groups, and linguistic backgrounds.

Table 1: Readers' Information

| pseudonym of reader | age/ grade | linguistic background | ethnic background | teacher researcher | # of sessions analyzed | date of studies |
|---------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Kari | 7 th | English | Anglo | Joel Brown | 5 | 1991 |
| Jaye | 7 th | Spanish | Hispanic | Joel Brown | 5 | 1991 |
| Chaz | 19 years | English | Native American | Eric Paulson | 2 | 1998 |
| Mauricio | 7 th | bilingual Spanish/English | Hispanic | Alan Flurkey | 12 | 1991 |
| Erica | 5 th | English | Hispanic | Gopa Goswami | 3 | 1998 |
| Reuben | 7 th | bilingual Spanish/English | Hispanic | Alan Flurkey | 2 | 1991 |
| Lamar | 6 th | English | African American | Wendy Black Daurie Zickerman | 3 | 1996 |
| Zach | 4 th | English | African American | Yetta Goodman | 11 | 1997 |

Six researchers analyzed the discourse of these readers, both individually and as a group, over a period of eight months. Discourse analysis methodology was based on research by Black, 1999, Lambert & Ervin-Tripp, 1993, Tannen, 1989, Green & Wallat, 1981, and involved a three step process of 1) construction of lesson transcript, 2), mapping lesson structure, and 3) analysis and pattern identification (see Black, 1999, p. 109).

III. Research Questions

Through examination of the issues raised by the six researchers over several group meetings, two research questions were developed that focused our analyses:

- Question 1: What aspects of the RMA session support the readers' development of a positive view of himself or herself as a reader, over time?
- Question 2: What language about language does the reader use to talk about his or her reading process and strategies (metacognitive and metalinguistic), over time?

These questions were further subcategorized throughout the period of analysis as categories emerged. The research questions are thus answered through the subcategories that are defined and supported by data from this study. Below, the subcategories are presented, followed by examples from the readers in this study that support those subcategories.

Categories that Inform the Research Questions

Q1: What aspects of the RMA session support the readers' development of a positive view of him or herself as a reader, over time?

- I Procedural *Description about the session's organization*
 - A. Structural Components (Phases and Instructional Sequences)
 - B. Organization (Order of Topics Discussed)
- II Language Used *Language about reading (metalinguage) that provides opportunities for the student to talk about reading in a comfortable conversational style*
 - A. Old Language Used
 - B. New Language Introduced
 - C. New Language Used

- III Interactional *The moves between the participants that show the reader's developing control over the conversation about reading*
 - A. Turn Taking
 - B. Control of Aspects Of Session (tape playing, etc.)
 - C. Positive Comments
- IV Ownership / Control *Developing ownership/control awareness by the reader of the reading process*

Q2: What language about language does the reader use to talk about his or her reading process and strategies (metacognitive and metalinguistic), over time? *How does the reader talk about reading?*

- I Reading Process
 - A. Strategies
 - B. Cueing Systems
 - 1. Graphophonic
 - 2. Syntactic
 - 3. Semantic
 - 4. Pragmatic
 - C. Metaphor
- II Metacognition
 - A. Imaging
 - B. Intertextuality
 - 1. Intratextuality
 - 2. General world knowledge
 - 3. Specific knowledge tied to a specific text

Due to space considerations selected subcategories are presented here that represent the depth of findings for all subcategories.

IV. Findings: Emerging Categories

The first category under Research Question 1 is *Procedural*, which helps map the ways in which the sessions' structure and organization are manifested. Each session was transcribed and the written transcriptions were divided into sessions and phases. Following a descriptive system outlined in Black (1999), one RMA conversation "sitting" is called a session, which is then broken up into phases. Each phase is further divided into interactional units, as Table 2 demonstrates:

Table 2: RMA Session 3, Selected Phases, Lamar

| | Instructional Sequences | | | | | |
|---------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|---|--|---|---------------------------|
| Phase 3 | Read sentence aloud | Listen to tape | Inquire about sentence transformation | Determine strategy use if reading silently | Lamar expresses frustration with author | Transition to next miscue |
| Phase 4 | Read sentence aloud | Listen to tape | Inquire about sentence transformation | Revaluing: predicting strategy | Revaluing: Inserting words to help make sense | Transition to next miscue |
| Phase 5 | Read and self-correct | Inquire about self correction | Listen to tape and self-praise for correction | Transition to next miscue | | |

Table 2 is representative of most of the RMA sessions in this study. Most phases were discussions about a single miscue, and within that phase the teacher/researcher and reader identified the miscue, discussed some aspect of its acceptability and/or its need to be corrected, linked that discussion to a larger one about reading in general, and decided to move on to the next miscue. This excerpt¹ from one of Lamar's RMA sessions illustrates the negotiation of the organization of a phase:

Figure 1: Negotiation of Organization

2082. T/R2: Are you ready?
 2083. How about we give you, a blank copy and a pencil.
 2084. We're going to play the tape that we made last time and we're going to have you mark=
 2085. Rdr: =my miscues.
 2086. T/R2: Uh hum.
 2087. T/R1: When you read something that's different than what is written, why don't you go ahead and read it out loud to us first, we're going to look at, starting right here.
 2088. Rdr: *It was hard work, but the Stonecutter was content until one day when he saw the king ride by.*
 2089. T/R1: That's what we're going to listen to.
 2090. Rdr.: Okay.

¹In all figures, the teacher/researcher is denoted "T/R" and the reader "Rdr." In sessions where there were more than one teacher/researcher or reader, they are numbered; i.e. Wendy Black is T/R1 in this transcript excerpt because during this session she worked with another teacher/researcher, Dauric Zickerman, who is termed T/R2 in all the figures.

The organization of the RMA sessions as described above allowed an easily understandable format for discussion while encouraging explorations of a variety of topics within those parameters.

Research Question 1 also focuses on aspects of the RMA session that result in the reader's development of a positive view of him/herself. Categories emerged as the researchers met to share their analyses to build a set of agreed upon categories. The subcategory *Language Used* deals with language about reading (metalinguage) that provides opportunities for the student to talk about reading in a comfortable conversational style.

Below, Lamar signifies his miscue by spelling out the observed response and then the expected response:

Figure 2: Lamar's Miscue Signification

1047. Rdr.: I don't know why I [reader spells out] w-h-e-n, it's [reader spells out] w-e-n-t.

Wendy introduces the term for the concept Lamar is discussing and defines it for him:

Figure 3: Wendy's Introduction of Miscue

1048. T/R1: Okay, we call these, we call that a miscue.
1049. And all that means is that you decided to say something that looks, that sounds different than what the text is actually written.

Lamar then tentatively uses the new term when discussing a substitution he made:

Figure 4: Lamar's Use of Miscue

1156. T/R1: You said "vision" instead of "view" [Rdr.:view], tell me about that.
1157. What do you think?
1158. Rdr.: It was, was a good miscue.

Wendy and Lamar's usage of the term "miscue" proceeded from Lamar's own language to Wendy's introduction of the conventional term to Lamar's adopting that term. This progression was evident throughout the readers' transcripts.

How the participants engaged in turn-taking, another subcategory, during their dialogue

demonstrates the interactional nature of RMA. Below, the teacher/researchers (Wendy and Daurie) and reader (Lamar) show a parity of contributions to the discussion:

Figure 5: Turn Taking

| | | |
|-------|-------|---|
| 2007. | T/R2: | Well, one of the things that Wendy and I have talked about, is that we really want to understand= |
| 2008. | Rdr.: | =Kids, and how they think. |
| 2009. | T/R1: | Think about= |
| 2010. | Rdr.: | =Reading. |
| 2011. | T/R2: | So you are a good predictor. |

Another important interactional aspect is *control*--who takes the lead, initiates discussion, ends phases, etc. In the following examples, Chaz gradually takes control of an important part of the RMA sessions: the decisions about when to play the tape of the reader's reading. In the first transcript excerpt, the teacher/researcher (Eric) is in control of the tape player, while the reader (Chaz) responds to his questions:

Figure 6: Control, Part A

| | | |
|-------|------|--|
| 1046. | T/R: | How were you trying to get this word when you played it. |
| 1047. | | let's play it {teacher/researcher plays tape}. |
| 1048. | Rdr: | I was, i was thinking in my mind, what does it mean? |

In this segment at a later time in the session, Chaz asks if he can play a part of his taped reading back, and Eric agrees. This is a tentative move toward establishing his right to decide what parts of the taped reading to listen to.

Figure 7: Control, Part B

| | | |
|-------|------|--|
| 1069. | Rdr: | I was going to say "your" but it said "you never." |
| 1070. | | Play it back? |
| 1071. | T/R: | Yeah. {plays tape} |

This segment reveals a reversal of roles--the reader holds the tape player, and the teacher/researcher asks him to play the tape:

Figure 8: Control, Part C

1108. T/R: You fixed it without even saying "never."
1109. Rdr: Really?
1110. T/R: Yeah.
1111. Play it again {Rdr, plays tape}.

The following dialogue is similar to the previous one in that Chaz still holds the tape player and Eric again asks him to play it. However, this time Eric asks for the tape to be played in response to Chaz's taking the lead in pointing something out:

Figure 9: Control, Part D

1359. Rdr: I said fingerprints, huh? {Laughs}.
1360. Did you hear me say fingerprints?
1361. T/R: Play it again. {Rdr, plays tape}.
1362. Mmm.
1363. I missed that the first time.

In this segment, the reader doesn't wait for the teacher/researcher to prompt him to play the tape. In response to Eric's pointing out a miscue that Chaz didn't hear, Chaz plays the tape:

Figure 10: Control, Part E

1408. T/R: That's not really a miscue, a miscue's more things that come from your head.
1409. Rdr: (Oh, yeah)
1410. T/R: (Could be one.)
1411. But there's one later on in this paragraph...
1412. Rdr: Oh really? {Rdr, plays tape}

Chaz demonstrates his control of the "tape-playback" aspect of the RMA session in this excerpt from the following session, where he is now holding the tape player, pointing out aspects of his taped reading, and making decisions about when to play the tape:

Figure 11: Control, Part F

2066. Rdr: Want to see where I stopped? {Rdr, plays tape}
2067. T/R: Yeah

Throughout the chronological transcript excerpts above, Chaz demonstrates a growing familiarity and confidence in his ability to not only carry on an RMA discussion but also to make

decisions about what to discuss and why. This feeling of control within a conversation about reading is crucial to the reader's feeling that s/he is an equal partner in the dialogue--if RMA were based on a transmission model of instruction this would not be important, but as an inquiry-based model of instruction it becomes very important.

Research Question 2 focuses on the ways in which the reader talks about reading, how the reader's metacognitive and metalinguistic knowledge is manifested in dialog. The first subcategory is *Reading Process*, and involves the reader's use of strategies, cueing systems, and metaphor.

Readers are actively involved in their reading and use a variety of methods to make meaning from the text. These methods of meaning making are known as reading strategies (Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 1987, p. 29). The way in which readers talk about their reading strategies is the focus of the first part of this subcategory, while the second part deals with the specific ways that readers make use of the syntactic, the semantic, the graphophonic, and the pragmatic cueing systems while transacting with the text. Below, the reader (Erica) and the teacher/researcher (Gopa) demonstrate their negotiation of grammatical knowledge while Erica uses the syntactic cuing system to disambiguate a word that is giving her problems.

Figure 12: Negotiation of Grammatical Knowledge

| | | |
|------|-------|---|
| 2355 | Rdr.: | <i>opening Uncle Jack's pr--</i> |
| 2356 | T/R: | What could it be? |
| 2357 | | What could that be? |
| 2358 | Rdr.: | <i>pr--</i> |
| 2359 | | Is it an action ? |
| 2360 | | No, it couldn't be an action. |
| 2361 | T/R: | It has to be like a thing or something. |
| 2362 | | Uh hm. |
| 2363 | | Very good. |

As part of the second research question, we focused on three types of intertextuality as

ways that readers verbalize metacognitive aspects of the reading process: intratextuality, general world knowledge, and specific knowledge tied to a specific text. In an example of the last type of intertextuality, Mauricio references a specific movie in explaining where he became familiar with a word in the text:

Figure 13: Intratextuality

| | | |
|-------|-------|---|
| 5212. | Rdr.: | You know where I learned this word? |
| 5213. | | Again from a movie. |
| 5214. | | I saw a swords movie--uh, uh, gods, you know, from a Greek movie? |
| 5215. | | They say, "We revell..."--what does it say, 'revole'?" |
| 5216. | T-R: | "--reveal." |
| 5217. | Rdr.: | ...reveal our secret to the world. |
| 5218. | | And the meaning I memorized, but not the word. |
| 5219. | | But I know the word a little bit. |

V. Summary of Conclusions

A common thread through all of the readers' RMA sessions is their movement toward central roles in the dialogs, toward equanimity and parity with the teacher/researcher's contributions to the discussions. This increase in discussant role goes hand-in-hand with an increase in the ability to talk about reading. As readers become more fluent in the language of reading, their confidence in their ability to learn about the reading process grows, and they become more in control of the RMA sessions. It is precisely this control over the reading process which teachers wish to see their students develop, since it influences reading proficiency.

Of course, it is not only the reader that develops during RMA sessions; the teacher/researcher also learns how to discuss the reading process with each individual reader. RMA sessions tend to progress from a primarily teacher/researcher driven dialog in the beginning sessions to a conversation between equals in the middle and latter sessions, during which it is frequently the reader who drives the session. During this progression, as the reader learns how to talk about

reading and the teacher/researcher learns how to discuss reading with the reader, each reader-teacher/researcher RMA team learns how to converse about reading. As this project has demonstrated, it is during these conversations about reading that students grow as learners and readers, learn to revalue themselves as readers, and begin to take control of the reading process.

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